

Safeguarding Policy: The Verwood and District Horticultural Society

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Safeguarding Policy is to protect children, young people, adults at risk, and vulnerable older people who participate in activities organised by the Verwood & District Horticultural Society ("the Society"). The Society is committed to creating a safe, welcoming, inclusive, and respectful environment for all members, volunteers, visitors, contractors, and participants.

This policy sets out the Society's responsibilities and procedures for safeguarding and promoting welfare during meetings, events, workshops, school visits, garden visits, planting projects, competitions, demonstrations, and community activities.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Committee members
- Volunteers
- Members
- Contractors and visiting speakers
- Anyone acting on behalf of the Society

It applies whenever Society activities involve:

- Children or young people under 18
- Adults at risk
- Elderly or vulnerable adults
- Public engagement activities
- Community horticultural or environmental projects
- Activities held jointly with schools, care providers, charities, or community organisations

3. Safeguarding Principles

The Society will:

- Promote the welfare, health, dignity, and safety of all participants
- Treat all individuals with respect and without discrimination
- Provide activities in a safe and inclusive environment
- Take concerns and allegations seriously
- Respond promptly and appropriately to safeguarding concerns
- Maintain a culture of openness and accountability
- Ensure volunteers understand their safeguarding responsibilities
- Follow relevant UK safeguarding legislation and Charity Commission guidance
- Ensure appropriate supervision ratios for activities involving children or vulnerable adults

4. Definitions

Child or Young Person

Anyone under the age of 18.

Adult at Risk

An adult who:

- Has care and support needs, and
- May be unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

This may include elderly people, people with disabilities, people with mental health conditions, or individuals experiencing illness, frailty, or social isolation.

5. Types of Abuse

Safeguarding concerns may include:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Discriminatory abuse
- Bullying, harassment, or intimidation
- Online abuse or inappropriate communications
- Exploitation or coercive behaviour

6. Safeguarding Lead

The Society appoints a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

Oliver Greensmith

82 Albion Way

Verwood

Dorset

BH31 7LR

The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- Receiving and recording safeguarding concerns
- Liaising with statutory agencies where necessary
- Ensuring safeguarding records are stored securely and confidentially
- Reviewing safeguarding procedures annually
- Supporting volunteers and committee members with safeguarding matters

7. Recruitment, Training and DBS Checks

The Society will:

- Risk assess volunteer and leadership roles involving contact with children or adults at risk
- Obtain appropriate DBS checks where activities meet eligibility requirements
- Provide safeguarding awareness information for committee members and volunteers
- Ensure safeguarding guidance is reviewed annually

- Maintain a clear code of conduct for all volunteers and representatives

Any safeguarding training undertaken should be refreshed periodically and recorded by the Society.

8. Responsibilities

The Society Committee will:

- Adopt and review this policy annually
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are recorded and acted upon appropriately
- Ensure risk assessments are carried out for activities involving vulnerable groups
- Ensure adequate insurance arrangements are in place
- Ensure activities involving children have appropriate parental or guardian consent
- Ensure there is an appropriate ratio of adults supervising children during activities
- Maintain accident and incident reporting procedures

9. Code of Conduct

All members and volunteers should:

- Treat everyone fairly and respectfully
- Avoid inappropriate language or behaviour
- Avoid being alone with a child or vulnerable adult wherever possible
- Ensure communication with children is appropriate and transparent
- Obtain parental consent for activities involving children
- Report safeguarding concerns immediately
- Respect privacy and confidentiality

The following are not acceptable:

- Bullying, intimidation, harassment, or discrimination
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Offensive, sexual, or abusive comments
- Unsafe working practices
- Sharing inappropriate images or messages
- Working under the influence of alcohol or drugs during Society activities

10. Photography and Online Safety

Photographs or videos of children or vulnerable adults must only be taken with appropriate consent from a parent, guardian, or responsible adult.

Images must be stored securely and only used for legitimate Society purposes. Personal contact details must not be published alongside images of children.

Online communications relating to Society activities should remain professional, appropriate, and transparent.

11. Reporting Concerns

Anyone who becomes aware of a safeguarding concern should report it immediately to the Safeguarding Lead.

Information should include:

- What was observed or disclosed

- Date, time, and location of the incident
- Names of those involved
- Any immediate actions taken

All concerns will be treated seriously and confidentially.

If someone is in immediate danger, emergency services should be contacted by dialling 999.

Where appropriate, concerns may also be referred to:

- Dorset Council Children's Services
- Dorset Adult Safeguarding Services
- The Police
- The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

12. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Safeguarding information will be handled sensitively and shared only on a need-to-know basis.

Safeguarding records must be stored securely and retained in accordance with UK GDPR and data protection legislation.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where there is a risk of harm to a child or adult at risk.

13. Health and Safety

The Society will:

- Carry out suitable risk assessments for activities
- Ensure adequate supervision during events
- Consider accessibility and inclusion
- Maintain safe equipment and working practices
- Ensure first aid arrangements are considered for organised events

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or safeguarding guidance changes.

Relevant guidance considered includes:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Care Act 2014 safeguarding duties
- Charity Commission safeguarding guidance
- DBS referral and safer recruitment guidance

Date Adopted: 26/05/2026

Review Date: 26/05/2027

Signed on behalf of the Society:

Name: Oliver Greensmith

Position: Chairman and Designated Safeguarding Lead

Date: 26/05/2026